

West Herts College Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 11 February 2026

Barnfield College

5pm – 7pm

MINUTES

Attendees:

Governors	Role:	Other Attendees	Role
Tony Breslin	Chair of Corporation	Sarah Knowles	DP-Corporate Services
Gill Worgan	Principal & CEO	Nidha Patel	Group Director-Finance
Phil Berry Arr. 5.44pm	External Governor	Amanda Washbrook	DP-Business Development
Charles Chidom	Staff Governor	Anne-Marie Kinsella	Governance Professional
Rachel Fox	External Governor	Apologies	
Chris Gentle	External Governor	Laura Dawson	External Governor
Jadan Kaliq	Student Governor	Wendy Donovan	External Governor
Stuart Ord	External Governor	Chris Nicholls	External Governor
Chris Rowe	External Governor	Gary Phillips	External Governor
Martin Sidders	External Governor		
Ash Wilson	Student Governor		
David York	Staff Governor		

Ref	Agenda Item
0	<p>The Chair gave a presentation to the Corporation outlining the key stages and expectations of the upcoming External Board Review (EBR). The EBR will be undertaken over the next six months, with the final report scheduled for presentation at the Corporation on the 08 July. A schedule of activities was provided to the Corporation for their consideration and input.</p> <p>The Corporation noted that the EBR was a developmental process rather than an inspection. The exercise is intended to further support the Corporation in enhancing its value and effectiveness to the College.</p> <p>ACTION: Governance Professional (GP) to circulate previous EBR report (February 2024) for information.</p>
25/17	<p>1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES</p> <p>1.1. Welcome The Chair welcomed all attendees to the Corporation Meeting.</p> <p>1.2. Apologies for absence and quoracy Apologies were received and accepted. The meeting was confirmed as quorate. All reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting for consideration.</p> <p>1.3. Declaration of pecuniary interests</p> <p>1.4. There were no declarations.</p> <p>1.5. Requests for urgent business There was one item of urgent business which was minuted in part 2a minutes. Student governors were excused for this item.</p>
25/18	<p>2. PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>2.1. Approval of Minutes (10 December 2025) The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and approved for electronic signature.</p>

2.2. Matters Arising and Action Log Review

There were no matters arising not on the agenda and there were no outstanding actions.

Ref	Action Log	when
25/11/3.2	The Chair to sign off the Financial accounts and the Letter of Representation	Completed

25/19

3. STRATEGIC ITEMS

3.1. Principals Report

In summary, the College has made a positive start to the new term. Quality of Education across the College is currently strong and showing improvements in several areas compared to the same point last year.

The Barnfield College Phase 3 capital project is going well. It is likely that new capital funding will be announced, and the College will consider the eligibility of the Plot A development for this funding.

Colleges have been invited to apply to become Technical Excellence Colleges (TECs) in Defence, Digital, Advanced Manufacturing and Clean Energy. Applications are restricted to providers located within designated geographical regions. The regions do not include Hertfordshire, Luton, or Beds.

The College has joined a collaborative community of colleges working on the development of AI solutions and is also undertaking its own work to develop and implement a range of AI solutions. Information about the progress and impact of all this work will be shared with Members during the Autumn term.

The College campuses and staff are currently being featured in the Department for Education's national teacher recruitment campaign, with footage broadcast at peak viewing times on major TV channels.

In response to questions from the Corporation, the Executive reported that some students are not attending lessons punctually, in the absence of any benchmarking data about, the College regards this as an area of focus. The Executive also confirmed that student numbers enrolled on Vocational Level 1 programmes are high.

Members discussed potential additional capital funding opportunities. The Executive advised that the College is following all required processes to secure funding for which it is eligible, whenever opportunities arise.

It was confirmed that the KPIs for English and Maths were rated green. These indicators are benchmarked against national averages, and the College's performance is currently aligned with national data.

The Corporation noted the increase in student numbers and the changes to the qualification offer, which are widening participation. Members also welcomed the introduction of the Engagement and Diversion Team, established to support students at risk of becoming NEET.

The Student Governors were invited to comment on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) among students. They reported that AI tools can contribute to increased pressure during exam periods, as students may feel they need to meet unrealistic expectations. They also highlighted that reliance on AI

	<p>may create false confidence, as AI-generated material does not always align with taught content, leading to knowledge gaps and reduced engagement.</p> <p><i>PB arrived at 17:44</i></p> <p>In response to questions from the Corporation, an update was provided on the potential reforms to the SEND system. Department for Education officials are engaging constructively with the sector and are seeking to reflect feedback within future policy. While the outcome of all proposed reforms remains uncertain, there is optimism that the reforms will lead to positive changes that benefit children, young people and adults with barriers to learning.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>
<p>25/21</p>	<p>4. QUALITY & STANDARDS 4.1. Health & Safety Annual Report</p> <p>The Annual Report summarised Health and Safety activities undertaken during the 2024–25 academic year. The report covered management arrangements, monitoring systems, accident and incident records, fire safety and evacuation procedures, and the outcomes of audits and inspections.</p> <p>It was noted that the web-based Environmental Health and Safety Management System is now fully implemented, providing increased transparency of information and improved tracking and monitoring of audit activity for leaders and managers.</p> <p>The Corporation sought clarification on the Health and Safety training provided to students. It was confirmed that this training forms part of the induction process and is embedded within the day-to-day delivery of curriculum programmes. It was also confirmed that the Health and Safety Manager’s role is solely dedicated to Health and Safety responsibilities.</p> <p>The Executive acknowledged that given the College’s growth, it would be useful to have information about proportionality when reviewing the number of incidents. A query was raised regarding off-campus incidents and whether these can be reported when students return to College. Assurance was provided that such incidents are relevant and can be reported.</p> <p>The wellbeing-related questions within the report were noted by the Corporation as very positive.</p> <p>The Corporation received an update regarding a recent near-miss incident. The incident did not meet the threshold for disclosure to the HSE.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>
<p>25/20</p>	<p>5. FINANCE & RESOURCES</p> <p>5.1. Finance Report (confidential) <i>Please see confidential minutes (part 2a)</i></p>
<p>25/22</p>	<p>6. GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE 6.1. Feedback from Learning Walks</p> <p>The Corporation received updates from recent Learning Walks and Safeguarding activity. It was reported that GP, CG and CR conducted a Learning Walk at the Watford campus on 27 January. GP provided written feedback in his absence, and CR and CG presented verbal feedback to the Corporation. All reports were very positive. CR noted that the quality of learning observed was “really good”, with a range of groups visited, including Level 1 Catering students who, one week into</p>

the second term, appeared confident, engaged and happy. A media group and media make-up session were also observed, with good teaching, strong facilities and positive student engagement reported. CG described the visit as “fantastic”, with particularly positive feedback following discussions with the careers team. The student-run restaurant was highlighted as impressive.

It was noted that LD attended a College Safeguarding Meeting on 4 February and had provided written feedback in her absence.

MS attended a Learning Walk on 10 February at the Barnfield campus, focusing specifically on Skills for Life provision. The visit was described as impressive, with staff demonstrating strong knowledge, significant experience and high levels of patience. Learning needs were observed to be carefully and consistently assessed.

6.2. Update on Corporation Membership

It was noted that David York’s term of office will expire on 13 February 2026. A staff election will be held, and the post filled for the next Corporation meeting on the 25 March 2026.

The Search and Governance Committee met on the 26 January and a verbal report on recruitment and succession planning was given under agenda item 6.4.

6.3. Update on Corporation Action Plan

The Action Plan was reviewed and noted.

6.4. Search & Governance Committee Feedback

The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee reported that there will be 2–3 governor vacancies from September. The recruitment process has already commenced, and the Committee will meet on 9 March to agree the scope of the advert, which is scheduled for publication later in March. The Committee aims to hold interviews in May and intends to invite the newly appointed governors to attend the Strategic Away Day in June.

Proposals for appointments to the roles of Vice Chair, Committee Chairs and Link EDI Governor from September were presented to the Corporation. As several of the nominated governors were not in attendance, approval of these appointments was deferred and will be brought to the next meeting.

ACTION: Corporation to approve at the next meeting the following appointments:

- Gary Philips to be appointed Chair of Quality & Curriculum Meeting
- Laura Dawson to be appointed Vice-Chair
- Rachel Fox to be appointed designated governor for Equality, Disability and Inclusion (EDI)

6.5. Policy Approvals:

6.5.1. Health & Safety Policy

The College’s Health and Safety Policy details how the College meets its statutory duties and is approved by Corporation on an annual basis. There are no proposed changes to the Policy on this occasion.

DECISION: The Corporation approved the Health & Safety Policy

6.5.2. Revised Governance Regulatory Documents

- 6.5.2.1. Standing Orders
- 6.5.2.2. Scheme of Delegation

	6.5.2.3. Remuneration Committee – Terms of Reference DECISION: The Corporation approved the revisions in the Standing Orders; Scheme of Delegation and the Terms of reference for the Remuneration Committee.
25/23	7. URGENT BUSINESS <i>Please see separate minutes Part 2a - confidential.</i>
25/24	8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 25 March, 5pm – Online TEAMS meeting.
CLG, Staff and Student Governors departed the meeting at 18.35	
25/25	9. Feedback from the Remuneration Committee <i>Please see confidential minutes (part 2b)</i>

Meeting closed:18.45

Minutes approved by the Corporation on 25 March 2026

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
0	Governance Professional (GP) to circulate previous EBR report (February 2024) for information.	23/02/26
25/22/6.5.2	Corporation to approve at the next meeting the following appointments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gary Philips to be appointed Chair of Quality & Curriculum Meeting • Laura Dawson to be appointed Vice-Chair • Rachel Fox to be appointed designated governor for Equality, Disability and Inclusion (EDI) 	25/03/26

Ref	Summary of Decisions
25/20/5.1	The Corporation approved the inclusion of the £586k for planning and pre-construction work (RIBA Stage 3) within the forecast outturn.
25/22/6.5.1	The Corporation approved the Health & Safety Policy
25/22/6.5.2	The Corporation approved the revisions in the Standing Orders; Scheme of Delegation and the Terms of reference for the Remuneration Committee.